

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

From the
INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY

REC'D 22 NOV 2004

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To:

see form PCT/ISA/220

PCT

WRITTEN OPINION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY (PCT Rule 43bis.1)

Date of mailing
(day/month/year) see form PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet)

FOR FURTHER ACTION See paragraph 2 below

Applicant's or agent's file reference
see form PCT/ISA/220

International application No.
PCT/IL2004/000674

International filing date (day/month/year)
25.07.2004

Priority date (day/month/year)
25.07.2003

International Patent Classification (IPC) or both national classification and IPC
A61 F2/44

Applicant
IMPLIANT LTD.

1. This opinion contains indications relating to the following items:

- Box No. I Basis of the opinion
- Box No. II Priority
- Box No. III Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability
- Box No. IV Lack of unity of invention
- Box No. V Reasoned statement under Rule 43bis.1(a)(i) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement
- Box No. VI Certain documents cited
- Box No. VII Certain defects in the international application
- Box No. VIII Certain observations on the international application

2. FURTHER ACTION

If a demand for international preliminary examination is made, this opinion will usually be considered to be a written opinion of the International Preliminary Examining Authority ("IPEA"). However, this does not apply where the applicant chooses an Authority other than this one to be the IPEA and the chosen IPEA has notified the International Bureau under Rule 66.1bis(b) that written opinions of this International Searching Authority will not be so considered.

If this opinion is, as provided above, considered to be a written opinion of the IPEA, the applicant is invited to submit to the IPEA a written reply together, where appropriate, with amendments, before the expiration of three months from the date of mailing of Form PCT/ISA/220 or before the expiration of 22 months from the priority date, whichever expires later.

For further options, see Form PCT/ISA/220.

3. For further details, see notes to Form PCT/ISA/220.

Name and mailing address of the ISA:



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**WRITTEN OPINION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY**

International application No.
PCT/IL2004/000674

Box No. I Basis of the opinion

1. With regard to the **language**, this opinion has been established on the basis of the international application in the language in which it was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.
 - This opinion has been established on the basis of a translation from the original language into the following language , which is the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international search (under Rules 12.3 and 23.1(b)).
2. With regard to any **nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence** disclosed in the international application and necessary to the claimed invention, this opinion has been established on the basis of:
 - a. type of material:
 - a sequence listing
 - table(s) related to the sequence listing
 - b. format of material:
 - in written format
 - in computer readable form
 - c. time of filing/furnishing:
 - contained in the international application as filed.
 - filed together with the international application in computer readable form.
 - furnished subsequently to this Authority for the purposes of search.
3. In addition, in the case that more than one version or copy of a sequence listing and/or table relating thereto has been filed or furnished, the required statements that the information in the subsequent or additional copies is identical to that in the application as filed or does not go beyond the application as filed, as appropriate, were furnished.
4. Additional comments:

**WRITTEN OPINION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY**

International application No.
PCT/IL2004/000674

Box No. II Priority

1. The following document has not been furnished:

- copy of the earlier application whose priority has been claimed (Rule 43bis.1 and 66.7(a)).
 translation of the earlier application whose priority has been claimed (Rule 43bis.1 and 66.7(b)).

Consequently it has not been possible to consider the validity of the priority claim. This opinion has nevertheless been established on the assumption that the relevant date is the claimed priority date.

2. This opinion has been established as if no priority had been claimed due to the fact that the priority claim has been found invalid (Rules 43bis.1 and 64.1). Thus for the purposes of this opinion, the international filing date indicated above is considered to be the relevant date.

3. Additional observations, if necessary:

Box No. V Reasoned statement under Rule 43bis.1(a)(i) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Statement

Novelty (N)	Yes: Claims	1-16
	No: Claims	
Inventive step (IS)	Yes: Claims	1-16
	No: Claims	
Industrial applicability (IA)	Yes: Claims	1-16
	No: Claims	

2. Citations and explanations

see separate sheet

Box No. VII Certain defects in the international application

The following defects in the form or contents of the international application have been noted:

see separate sheet

Re Item V

Reasoned statement with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

- 1 The following documents are referred to in this communication:
D1 : WO 00/44319 A (GLOBERMAN OREN ; SHAVIT RONEN (IL); SHENHAV BOAZ (IL); DISC O TECH MED) 3 August 2000 (2000-08-03)
D2 : US 5 059 193 A (KUSLICH STEPHEN D) 22 October 1991 (1991-10-22)

- 2 Document D1, which is considered to represent the most relevant state of the art, discloses (see page 28, lines 21-31 and fig. 2H):
An intervertebral implant comprising a sheath (100) made of metal assembled around a rod (106), a portion (102) of the sheath for sliding along said rod, and a sheath compactor (104) for sliding a portion of the sheath along the rod in order to expand folds of the sheath radially outwards from the rod.

From this, the subject-matter of independent claim 1 differs in that the sheath is elastomeric.

2.1 The subject-matter of claim 1 is therefore novel (Article 33(2) PCT)
The problem to be solved by the present invention may be regarded as:
To provide an intervertebral implant of the type described which is adapted to replace a disc nucleus and its function.

2.2 The solution to this problem proposed in claim 1 of the present application is considered as involving an inventive step (Article 33(3) PCT) for the following reasons:
The present invention solves the problem posed, because the elastomeric sheath simulates the mechanical properties of the disc nucleus by maintaining the mobility of the spinal column.
This is neither disclosed nor fairly suggested by any of the documents cited in the international search report.

2.3 Claims 2-16 are dependent on claim 1 and as such also meet the requirements of the PCT with respect to novelty and inventive step.

**WRITTEN OPINION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING
AUTHORITY (SEPARATE SHEET)**

International application No.

PCT/IL2004/000674

Re Item VII

Certain defects in the international application

The independent claims are not written in the two part form (Rule 6.3(b) PCT), which in the present case would be appropriate, with those features known in combination from the prior art (document D1) being placed in the preamble (Rule 6.3(b)(i) PCT) and with the remaining features being included in the characterising part (Rule 6.3(b)(ii) PCT).

The features of the claims are not provided with reference signs placed in parentheses to increase the intelligibility of the claims (Rule 6.2(b) PCT). This applies to both the preamble and characterising portion (see the PCT Guidelines, III-4.11).

The document D1 is not identified in the description and the relevant background art disclosed therein is not discussed (Rule 5.1(a)(ii) PCT).